London Lyrics

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The portrait by Mr. J. E. Millais first appeared in the Edition of 1868.

Yours very truly
Frederick Locker.

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & Co

LONDON LYRICS

BY

FREDERICK LOCKER

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KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO
MDCCCLXXXV

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Oh, for the Poet-Voice that swells
To lofty truths, or noble curses—
I only wear the cap and bells,
And yet some tears are in my verses.
I softly trill my sparrow-reed,
Pleased if but one should like the twitter;
Humbly I lay it down to heed
A music or a Minstrel fitter.

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THE UNREALIZED IDEAL.

My only Love is always near,—
In country or in town
I see her twinkling feet, I hear
The whisper of her gown.

She foots it ever fair and young,
Her locks are tied in haste,
And one is o'er her shoulder flung,
And hangs below her waist.

She ran before me in the meads;
And down this world-worn track
She leads me on; but while she leads
She never gazes back.

And yet her voice is in my dreams,
To witch me more and more;
That wooing voice! Ah me, it seems
Less near me than of yore.

Lightly I sped when hope was high,
And youth beguiled the chase;
I follow—follow still; but I
Shall never see her Face.

ASIATIC

TO MY GRANDMOTHER.

(SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE BY MR. ROMNEY.)

Under the elm a rustic seat
Was merriest Susan's pet retreat
To merry-make.

This Relative of mine,
Was she seventy-and-nine
When she died?
By the canvas may be seen
How she look'd at seventeen,
As a Bride.

Beneath a summer tree
Her maiden reverie
Has a charm;
Her ringlets are in taste;
What an arm! and what a waist
For an arm!

With her bridal-wreath, bouquet,
Lace farthingale, and gay
Falbala,—
If Romney's touch be true,
What a lucky dog were you,
Grandpapa!

Her lips are sweet as love;
They are parting! Do they move?
Are they dumb?
Her eyes are blue, and beam
Beseechingly, and seem
To say, "Come!"

What funny fancy slips
From atween these cherry lips?
Whisper me,
Fair Sorceress in paint,
What canon says I mayn't
Marry thee?

That good-for-nothing Time
Has a confidence sublime!

When I first
Saw this Lady, in my youth,
Her winters had, forsooth,
Done their worst.

Her locks, as white as snow,
Once shamed the swarthy crow;
By-and-by
That fowl's avenging sprite
Set his cruel foot for spite
Near her eye.

Her rounded form was lean,
And her silk was bombazine:
Well I wot
With her needles would she sit,
And for hours would she knit,—
Would she not?

Ah perishable clay!
Her charms had dropt away
One by one:
But if she heaved a sigh

With a burthen, it was, "Thy
Will be done."

In travail, as in tears,
With the fardel of her years
Overprest,
In mercy she was borne
Where the weary and the worn
Are at rest.

O if you now are there,
And sweet as once you were,
Grandmamma,
This nether world agrees
You'll all the better please
Grandpapa.

A HUMAN SKULL.

A human Skull! I bought it passing cheap,
No doubt 'twas dearer to its first employer!
I thought mortality did well to keep
Some mute memento of the Old Destroyer.

Time was, some may have prized its blooming skin;
Here lips were woo'd, perhaps, in transport tender;
Some may have chuck'd what was a dimpled chin,
And never had my doubt about its gender.

Did She live yesterday or ages back?
What colour were the eyes when bright and waking?
And were your ringlets fair, or brown, or black,
Poor little Head! that long has done with aching?

It may have held (to shoot some random shots)
Thy brains, Eliza Fry! or Baron Byron's;

The wits of Nelly Gwynne, or Doctor Watts,—
Two quoted bards. Two philanthropic sirens.

But this I trust is clearly understood;
If man or woman,—if adored or hated—
Whoever own'd this Skull was not so good,
Nor quite so bad as many may have stated.

* * * *

Who love can need no special type of Death;
He bares his awful face too soon, too often;
Immortelles bloom in Beauty's bridal wreath,
And does not yon green elm contain a coffin?

O True-Love mine, what lines of care are these?
The heart still lingers with its golden hours,
But fading tints are on the chestnut-trees,
And where is all that lavish wealth of flowers?

The end is near. Life lacks what once it gave,
Yet Death hath promises that call for praises;
A very worthless rogue may dig the grave,
But Hands unseen will dress the turf with daisies.

1860.

MY NEIGHBOUR ROSE.

Though walls but thin our hearths divide,
We're strangers, dwelling side by side ;—
How gaily all your days must glide
Unvex'd by labour !
I've seen you weep, and could have wept ;
I've heard you sing, (and might have slept !)
Sometimes I hear your chimney swept,
My Charming Neighbour !

Your pets are mine. Pray what may ail
The pup, once eloquent of tail ?
I wonder why your nightingale
Is mute at sunset.
Your puss, demure and pensive, seems
Too fat to mouse. Much she esteems
Yon sunny wall, and, dozing, dreams
Of mice she once ate.

Our tastes agree. I dote upon
Frail jars, turquoise and celadon,
The *Wedding March* of Mendelssohn,
And *Penseroso.*
When sorely tempted to purloin
Your *Pietà* of Marc Antoine,
Fair virtue doth fair play enjoin,
Fair Virtuoso!

At times an *Ariel*, cruel-kind,
Will kiss my lips, and stir your blind,
And whisper low, "She hides behind;
Thou art not lonely."
The tricksy sprite would erst assist
At hush'd Verona's moonlight tryst;—
Sweet Capulet, thou wert not kiss'd
By light winds only.

I miss the simple days of yore,
When two long braids of hair you wore,
And *Chat Botté* was wonder'd o'er,
In corner cosy.
But gaze not back for tales like those:

It's all in order, I suppose ;
The bud is now a blooming ROSE,—
A rosy-posy !

Indeed, farewell to bygone years ;
How wonderful the change appears ;
For curates now, and cavaliers,
In turn perplex you :
The last are birds of feather gay,
Who swear the first are birds of prey ;—
I'd scare them all had I my way,
But that might vex you.

Sometimes I've envied, it is true,
That Hero, joyous twenty-two,
Who sent *bouquets* and *billets doux*,
And wore a sabre.
The Rogue ! how close his arm he wound
About Her waist, who never frown'd.
He loves you, Child. Now, is he bound
To love *my* Neighbour ?

The bells are ringing. As is meet,
White favours fascinate the street,

Sweet faces greet me, rueful-sweet
'Twixt tears and laughter:
They crowd the door to see her go,
The bliss of one brings many woe;—
Ay, kiss the Bride, and I will throw
The old shoe after.

What change in one short afternoon,
My own dear Neighbour gone,—so soon!
Is yon pale orb her honey-moon
Slow rising hither?
O lady, wan and marvellous!
How often have we communed thus!
Sweet memory shall dwell with us,
And joy go with her.

1861.

THE WIDOW'S MITE.

A Widow—she had only one !
A puny and decrepit Son ;
But, day and night,
Though fretful oft, and weak and small,
A loving Child, he was her all—
The Widow's Mite.

The Widow's Mite ! ay, so sustain'd,
She battled onward, nor complain'd
That friends were fewer :
And while she toil'd for daily fare,
A little crutch upon the stair
Was music to her.

I saw her then,—and now I see
That, though resign'd and cheerful, she
Has sorrow'd much :
She has, HE gave it tenderly,
Much faith ; and, carefully laid by,
A little Crutch.

1856.

ST. JAMES'S STREET.

(*See note.*)

St. James's Street, of classic fame,
For Fashion still is seen there :
St. James's Street? I know the name,
I almost think I've been there !
Why, that's where *Sacharissa* sigh'd
When Waller read his ditty ;
Where Byron lived, and Gibbon died,
And Alvanley was witty.

A famous Street ! To yonder Park
Young Churchill stole in class-time ;
Come, gaze on fifty men of mark,
And then recall the past time.
The *plats* at White's, the play at *Crock's*,
The bumpers to Miss Gunning ;
The *bonhomie* of Charley Fox,
And Selwyn's ghastly funning.

The dear old Street of clubs and *cribs*,
As north and south it stretches,
Still seems to smack of Rolliad squibs,
And Gillray's fiercer sketches;
The quaint old dress, the grand old style,
The *mots*, the racy stories;
The wine, the dice, the wit, the bile—
The hate of Whigs and Tories.

At dusk, when I am strolling there,
Dim forms will rise around me;
Lepel flits past me in her chair,
And Congreve's airs astound me!
And once Nell Gwynne, a frail young Sprite,
Look'd kindly when I met her;
I shook my head, perhaps,—but quite
Forgot to quite forget her.

The Street is still a lively tomb
For rich, and gay, and clever;
The crops of dandies bud and bloom,
And die as fast as ever.

Now gilded youth loves cutty pipes,
And slang that's rather *scaring;*
It can't approach its prototypes
In taste, or tone, or bearing.

In Brummell's day of buckle shoes,
Lawn cravats, and roll collars,
They'd fight, and woo, and bet—and lose
Like gentlemen and scholars:
I'm glad young men should go the pace,
I half forgive *Old Rapid;*
These louts disgrace their name and race—
So vicious and so vapid!

Worse times may come. *Bon ton*, indeed,
Will then be quite forgotten,
And all we much revere will speed
From ripe to worse than rotten:
Let grass then sprout between yon stones,
And owls then roost at Boodle's,
For Echo will hurl back the tones
Of screaming *Yankee Doodles.*

I love the haunts of old Cockaigne,
  Where wit and wealth were squander'd;
The halls that tell of hoop and train,
  Where grace and rank have wander'd;
Those halls where ladies fair and leal
  First ventured to adore me!
Something of that old love I feel
  For this old Street before me.

1867.

BEGGARS.

They eat, and drink, and scheme, and plod,—
They go to church on Sunday;
And many are afraid of God—
And more of Mrs. Grundy.

I am pacing the Mall in a rapt reverie,
I am thinking if Sophy is thinking of me,
When I'm roused by a ragged and shivering wretch,
Who seems to be well on his way to Jack Ketch.

He has got a bad face, and a shocking bad hat;
A comb in his fist, and he sees I'm a flat,
For he says, "Buy a comb, it's a fine un to wear;
On'y try it, my Lord, through your whiskers and 'air."

He eyes my gold chain, as if greedy to crib it;
He looks just as if he'd been blown from a gibbet.
I pause . . . ! I pass on, and beside the club fire
I settle that Sophy is all I desire.

As I stroll from the club, and am deep in a strophè
That rolls upon all that's delightful in Sophy,
I'm humbly addressed by an "object" unnerving,
So tatter'd a wretch must be "highly deserving."

She begs,—I am touch'd, but I've great circumspection;
I stifle remorse with the soothing reflection
That cases of vice are by no means a rarity—
The worst vice of all's indiscriminate charity.

Am I right? How I wish that my clerical guide
Would settle this question—and others beside.
For always one's heart to be hardening thus,
If wholesome for Beggars, is hurtful for us.

A few minutes later I'm happy and free
To sip "*Its own Sophykins*'" five-o'clock tea:
Her table is loaded, for when a girl marries,
What bushels of rubbish they send her from *Barry's!*

"There's a present for *you*, Sir!" Yes, thanks to her thrift,
My Pet has been able to buy me a gift;

And she slips in my hand, the delightfully sly
Thing,
A paper-weight form'd of a bronze lizard writhing.

"What a charming *cadeau!* and so truthfully
moulded;
But perhaps you don't know, or deserve to be
scolded,
That in casting this metal a live, harmless lizard
Was cruelly tortured in ghost and in gizzard?"

"Po-oh!"—says my Lady, (she always says "Pooh"
When she's wilful, and does what she oughtn't
to do!)
"Hopgarten protests they've no feeling, and so
It was only their *muscular movement*, you know!"

Thinks I (when I've said *au revoir*, and depart—
A Comb in my pocket, a Weight—at my heart),
And when wretched Mendicants writhe, there's a
notion
That begging is only their "muscular motion."

BRAMBLE-RISE.

What changes greet my wistful eyes
In quiet little Bramble-Rise,
The pride of all the shire;
How alter'd is each pleasant nook;—
And used the dumpy church to look
So dumpy in the spire?

This Village is no longer mine;
And though the inn has changed its sign,
The beer may not be stronger;
The haunt of butterflies and bees
Is now a street, the cottages
Are cottages no longer.

The mud is brick, the thatch is slate,
The pound has tumbled out of date,
And all the trees are stunted:

Surely these thistles once grew figs,
These geese were swans, and once the pigs
More musically grunted.

Where boys and girls pursued their sports
A locomotive puffs and snorts,
And gets my malediction;
The turf is dust—the elves are fled—
The ponds have shrunk — and tastes have spread
To photograph and fiction.

Ah, there's a face I know again,
There's Patty trotting down the lane
To fill her pail with water;
Yes, Patty! but I fear she's not
The tricksy Pat that used to trot,
But Patty,—Patty's daughter!

And has she, too, outlived the spells
Of breezy hills and silent dells
Where childhood loved to ramble?

Then life was thornless to our ken,
And, Bramble-Rise, thy hills were then
A rise without a bramble.

Whence comes the change? 'Twere simply told;
For some grow wise, and some grow cold,
And all feel time and trouble:
If Life an empty bubble be,
How sad for those who cannot see
The rainbow in the bubble!

And senseless too, for Madam Fate
Is not the fickle reprobate
That moody folk have thought her;
My heart leaps up, and I rejoice
As falls upon my ear thy voice,
My little friskful Daughter.

Come hither, Fairy, perch on these
Thy most unworthy father's knees,
And tell him all about it.
Are dolls a sham? Can men be base?
When gazing on thy blessed face
I'm quite prepared to doubt it.

* * *

Though life is call'd a weary jaunt,
Though earthly joys, the wisest grant,
Have no enduring basis;
It's pleasant, (if I must be here!)
To find with Puss, my daughter dear,
A little cool oasis!

Oh, may'st thou some day own, sweet Elf,
A Pet just like thy winsome self,
Her sanguine thoughts to borrow;
Content to use her brighter eyes,
Accept her childish ecstasies,—
If need be, share her sorrow.

The wisdom of thy prattle cheers
My heart; and when, outworn in years,—
When homeward I am starting,
My Darling, lead me gently down
To life's dim strand; the skies may frown,
—But weep not for our parting.

April, 1857.

A GARDEN LYRIC.

The flow of life is yet a rill
That laughs, and leaps, and glistens;
And still the woodland rings, and still
The old Damœtas listens.

We have loiter'd and laugh'd in the flowery croft,
We have met under wintry skies;
Her voice is the dearest voice, and soft
Is the light in her gentle eyes;
It is sweet in the silent woods, among
Gay crowds, or in any place
To hear her voice, to gaze on her young
Confiding face.

For ever may roses divinely blow,
And wine-dark pansies charm
By the prim box path where I felt the glow
Of her dimpled, trusting arm,

And the sweep of her silk as she turn'd and smiled
A smile as pure as her pearls;
The breeze was in love with the darling Child,
As it moved her curls.

She show'd me her ferns and woodbine-sprays,
Foxglove and jasmine stars,
A mist of blue in the beds, a blaze
Of red in the celadon jars:
And velvety bees in convolvulus bells,
And roses of bountiful June—
Oh, who would think their summer spells
Could die so soon!

For a glad song came from the milking shed,
On a wind of the summer south,
And the green was golden above her head,
And a sunbeam kiss'd her mouth;
Sweet were the lips where that sunbeam dwelt;
And the wings of Time were fleet
As I gazed; and neither spoke, for we felt
Life was so sweet!

And the odorous limes were dim above
As we leant on a drooping bough;
And the darkling air was a breath of love,
And a witching thrush sang "Now!"
For the sun dropt low, and the twilight grew
As we listen'd, and sigh'd, and leant;
That day was the sweetest day—and we knew
What the sweetness meant.

1868.

GERTRUDE'S NECKLACE.

As Gerty skipt from babe to girl,
Her Necklace lengthen'd, pearl by pearl;
Year after year it grew, and grew,
For every birthday gave her two:
Her neck is lovely,—soft and fair,
And now her Necklace glimmers there.

So cradled, let it fall and rise,
And all her graces symbolize.
Perchance this pearl, without a speck,
Once was as warm on Sappho's neck;
Where are the happy, twilight pearls
That braided Beatrice's curls?

Is Gerty loved? Is Gerty loth?
Or, if she's either, is she both?
She's fancy free, but sweeter far
Than many plighted maidens are:

Will Gerty smile us all away,
And still be Gerty? Who can say?

But let her wear her Precious Toy,
And I'll rejoice to see her joy:
Her bauble's only one degree
Less frail, less fugitive than we,
For time, ere long, will snap the skein,
And scatter all her Pearls again.

GERTRUDE'S GLOVE.

Elle avait au bout des ses manches
Une paire de mains si blanches !

Slips of a kid-skin deftly sewn,
A scent as through her garden blown,
The tender hue that clothes her dove,
All these, and this is Gerty's Glove.

A Glove but lately dofft, for look—
It keeps the happy shape it took
Warm from her touch ! What gave the glow ?
And where's the Mould that shaped it so ?

It clasp'd the hand, so pure, so sleek,
Where Gerty rests a pensive cheek ;
The hand that when the light wind stirs,
Reproves those laughing locks of hers.

You Fingers four, you little Thumb!
Were I but you, in days to come
I'd clasp, and kiss,—I'd keep her. Go!
And tell her that I told you so.

KISSINGEN, *September*, 1871.

THE OLD OAK-TREE AT HATFIELD BROADOAK.

A mighty growth ! The county side
Lamented when the Giant died,
For England loves her trees :
What misty legends round him cling ;
How lavishly he once could fling
His acorns to the breeze !

Who struck a thousand roots in fame,
Who gave the district half its name,
Will not be soon forgotten :
Last spring he show'd but one green bough,
The red leaves hang there yet,—and now
His very props are rotten !

Elate, the thunderbolt he braved,
For centuries his branches waved
A welcome to the blast ;

From reign to reign he bore a spell ;
No forester had dared to fell
What time has fell'd at last.

The Monarch wore a leafy crown,
And wolves, ere wolves were hunted down,
Found shelter in his gloom ;
Unnumber'd squirrels frolick'd free,
Glad music fill'd the gallant Tree
From stem to topmost bloom.

It's hard to say, 'twere vain to seek
When first he ventured forth, a meek
Petitioner for dew ;
No Saxon spade disturb'd his root,
The rabbit spared the tender shoot,
And valiantly he grew,

And show'd some inches from the ground
When St. Augustine came and found
Us very proper Vandals :
Then nymphs had bluer eyes than hose ;
England then measured men by blows,
And measured time by candles.

The pilgrim bless'd his grateful shade
Ere Richard led the first crusade;
And maidens loved to dance
Where, boy and man, in summer-time,
Chaucer had ponder'd o'er his rhyme;
And Robin Hood, perchance,

Stole hither to Maid Marian;
(Well, if they did not come, one can
At any rate suppose it);
They met beneath the mistletoe,—
We've done the same, and ought to know
The reason why they chose it!

And this was call'd the *Traitor's Branch*,
Stern Warwick hung six yeomen stanch
Along its mighty fork;
Uncivil wars for them! The fair
Red rose and white still bloom, but where
Are Lancaster and York?

Right mournfully his leaves he shed
To shroud the graves of England's dead,
By English falchion slain;

And cheerfully, for England's sake,
He sent his kin to sea with Drake,
When Tudor humbled Spain.

While Blake was fighting with the Dutch
They gave his poor old arms a crutch;
And thrice-four maids and men ate
A meal within his rugged bark,
When Coventry bewitch'd the Park,
And Chatham ruled the Senate.

His few remaining boughs were green,
And dappled sunbeams danced between
Upon the dappled deer,
When, clad in black, two mourners met
To read the Waterloo Gazette,—
They mourn'd their darling here.

They join'd their Boy. The Tree at last
Lies prone, discoursing of the past,
Some fancy-dreams awaking;
At rest, though headlong changes come
Though nations arm to roll of drum,
And dynasties are quaking.

Romantic Spot! By honest pride
Of old tradition sanctified;
My pensive vigil keeping,
Thy beauty moves me like a spell,
And thoughts, and tender thoughts, upwell,
That fill my heart to weeping.

* * * * *

The Squire affirms, with gravest look,
His Oak goes back to Domesday Book:
And some say even higher!
We rode last week to see the Ruin,
We love the fair domain it grew in,
And well we love the Squire.

A nature loyally controll'd,
And fashion'd in that righteous mould
Of English gentleman;
My child some day will read these rhymes,
She loved her "godpapa" betimes,—
The little christian!

I love the Past, its ripe pleasance,
And lusty thought, and dim romance,—
Its heart-compelling ditties;

But more, these ties, in mercy sent,
With faith and true affection blent,
And, wanting them, I were content
To murmur, "*Nunc dimittis.*"

HALLINGBURY: *April*, 1859.

AT HURLINGHAM.

I recollect a nurse call'd Ann,
Who carried me about the grass,
And one fine day a fine young man
Came up, and kiss'd the pretty Lass:
She did not make the least objection!
Thinks I, "Aha!
When I can talk I'll tell Mamma."
—And that's my earliest recollection.

A TERRIBLE INFANT.

This was dear Willy's brief despatch,
A curt and yet a cordial summons;—
"Do come! I'm in to-morrow's match,
And see us whip the *Faithful Commons.*"
We trundled out behind the bays,
Through miles and miles of brick and garden;
Mamma was drest in mauve and maize,—
She let me wear my *Dolly Varden.*

A charming scene, and lively too;
The paddock's full, the band is playing
Boulotte's song in *Barbe bleue;*
And what are all these people saying?
They flirt! they bet! There's Linda Reeves
Too lovely! I'd give worlds to borrow
Her yellow rose with russet leaves!—
I'll wear a yellow rose to-morrow!

And there are May and Algy Meade;
How proud she looks on her promotion!
The ring must be amused indeed,
And edified by such devotion!
I wonder if she ever guessed!—
I wonder if he'll call on Friday!—
I often wonder which is best!—
I only hope my hair is tidy!

Some girls repine, and some rejoice,
And some get bored, but I'm contented
To make my destiny my choice,
I'll never dream that I've repented.

There's something sad in *loved and cross'd*,
For all the fond, fond hope that rings it:
There's something sweet in "Loved and Lost";
And Oh, how sweetly Alfred sings it!

I'll own I'm bored with *handicaps!*
Bluerocks! (they always are "*bluerock*"-ing!)—
With May, a little bit, perhaps,—
And yon Faust's *teufelshund* is shocking!
Bang . . bang . . ! That's Willy! There's his bird,
Blithely it cleaves the skies above me!
He's miss'd all ten! He's too absurd!—
I hope he'll always, always love me!

We've lost! To tea, then back to town;
The crowd is laughing, eating, drinking:
The Moon's eternal eyes look down,—
Of what can yon pale Moon be thinking?
Oh, but for some good fairy's wand!
This *Pigeoncide* is worse than silly,
But still I'm very, very fond
Of Hurlingham, and tea,—and Willy.

THE PILGRIMS OF PALL MALL.

My little Friend, so small, so neat,
Whom years ago I used to meet
In Pall Mall daily.
How cheerily you tript away
To work, it might have been to play,
You tript so gaily.

And Time trips too! This moral means
You then were midway in the teens
That I was crowning;
We never spoke, but when I smiled
At morn or eve, I know, dear Child,
You were not frowning.

Each morning that we met, I think
One sentiment us two did link,
Not joy, nor sorrow;
And then at eve, experience-taught,
Our hearts were lighter for the thought,—
We meet to-morrow!

And you were poor, so poor! and why?
How kind to come, it was for my
Especial grace meant!
Had you a chamber near the stars,—
A bird,—some treasured plants in jars,
About your casement?

I often wander up and down,
When morning bathes the silent town
In dewy glory;
Perhaps, unwitting I have heard
Your thrilling-toned canary-bird
From that third story.

I've seen some change since last we met—
A patient little Seamstress yet,
On small wage striving,
Are you, if Love such luck allows,
Some little fellow's lucky spouse?—
Is Baby thriving?

My heart grows chill! Can Soul like thine,
Weary of this dear world of mine,
Have loosed its fetter,

To find a world, whose promised bliss
Is better than the best of this?—
And is it better?

Sometimes to Pall Mall I repair,
And see the damsels passing there;
But if I try to . . .
To get one glance, they look discreet,
As though they'd some one else to meet;—
As have not *I* too?

Yet still I often think upon
Our many meetings, come and gone,
July—December!
Now let us make a tryst, and when,
Dear little Soul, we meet again,
In some more kindly sphere, why then
Thy friend remember.

1856.

AN OLD MUFF.

He cannot be complete in aught
Who is not humorously prone,—
A man without a merry thought
Can hardly have a funny bone.

Time has a magic wand!
What is this meets my hand,
Moth-eaten, mouldy, and
Cover'd with fluff?
Faded, and stiff, and scant;
Can it be? no, it can't—
Yes, I declare, it's Aunt
Prudence's Muff!

Years ago, twenty-three,
Old Uncle Doubledee
Gave it to Aunty P.
Laughing and teasing—

"Pru., of the breezy curls,
Question those solemn churls,—
What holds a pretty girl's
Hand without squeezing?"

Uncle was then a lad
Gay, but, I grieve to add,
Sinful, if smoking bad
Baccy's a vice:
Glossy was then this mink
Muff, lined with pretty pink
Satin, which maidens think
"Awfully nice!"

I seem to see again
Aunt in her hood and train,
Glide, with a sweet disdain,
Gravely to Meeting:
Psalm-book and kerchief new,
Peep'd from the Muff of Pru.;
Young men, and pious too,
Giving her greeting.

Sweetly her Sabbath sped
Then; from this Muff, it's said,
Tracts she distributed :—
Converts (till Monday !)
Lured by the grace they lack'd,
Follow'd her. One, in fact,
Ask'd for—and got his tract
Twice of a Sunday !

Love has a potent spell;
Soon this bold *Ne'er-do-well*,
Aunt's too susceptible
Heart undermining,
Slipt, so the scandal runs,
Notes in the pretty nun's
Muff, triple-corner'd ones,
Pink as its lining.

Worse follow'd—soon the jade
Fled (to oblige her blade !)
Whilst her friends thought that they'd
Lock'd her up tightly :
After such shocking games

Aunt is of wedded dames
Gayest, and now her name's
Mrs. Golightly.

In female conduct flaw
Sadder I never saw,
Faith still I've in the law
Of compensation.
Once Uncle went astray,
Smoked, joked, and swore away,
Sworn by he's now, by a
Large congregation.

Changed is the Child of Sin,
Now he's (he once was thin)
Grave, with a double chin,—
Blest be his fat form!
Changed is the garb he wore,
Preacher was never more
Prized than is Uncle for
Pulpit or platform.

If all's as best befits
Mortals of slender wits,

Then beg this Muff and its
Fair owner pardon:
All's for the best, indeed
Such is my simple creed;
Still I must go and weed
Hard in my garden.

1863.

GERALDINE.

A simple Child has claims
On your sentiment, her name's
Geraldine.
Be tender, but beware,—
She's frolicsome as fair,
And fifteen.

She has gifts to grace allied,
And each she has applied,
And improved:
She has bliss that lives and leans
On loving, and that means
She is loved.

Her beauty is refined
By harmony of mind,
And the art,

And the blessed nature, too,
Of a tender, and a true
Little heart.

And yet I mustn't vault
Over any foolish fault
That she owns;
Or others might rebel,
And enviously swell
In their zones.

For she's tricksy as the fays,
Or her pussy when it plays
With a string:
She's a goose about her cat,
Her ribbons, and all that
Sort of thing.

These foibles are a blot,
Still she never can do what
Isn't *nice;*
Such as quarrel, and give slaps—
As I've known her get perhaps
Once or twice.

The spells that draw her soul
Are subtle—sad or droll :
She can show
That virtuoso whim
Which consecrates our dim
Long-ago.

A love that is not sham
For Stothard, Blakē, and Lamb ;
And I've known
Cordelia's sad eyes
Cause angel-tears to rise
In her own.

Her gentle spirit yearns
When she reads of Robin Burns :—
Luckless bard !
Had she blossom'd in thy time,
Oh, how rare had been the rhyme
—And reward !

Thrice happy then is hē
Who, planting such a Tree,
Sees it bloom

To shelter him; indeed
We have joyance as we speed
To our doom!

I'm happy, having grown
Such a Sapling of my own;
And I crave
No garland for my brows,
But rest beneath its boughs
To the grave.

1864.

AT HER WINDOW.

Ah, Minstrel, how strange is
The carol you sing!
Let Psyche, who ranges
The garden of spring,
Remember the changes
December will bring.

Beating Heart! we come again
Where my Love reposes:
This is Mabel's window-pane;
These are Mabel's roses.

Is she nested? Does she kneel
In the twilight stilly,
Lily clad from throat to heel,
She, my virgin Lily?

Soon the wan, the wistful stars,
Fading, will forsake her;
Elves of light, on beamy bars,
Whisper then, and wake her.

Let this friendly pebble plead
At her flowery grating;
If she hear me will she heed?
Mabel, I am waiting.

Mabel will be deck'd anon,
Zoned in bride's apparel;
Happy zone! Oh hark to yon
Passion-shaken carol!

Sing thy song, thou trancèd thrush,
Pipe thy best, thy clearest;—
Hush, her lattice moves, O hush—
Dearest Mabel!—dearest . . .

ROTTEN ROW.

I hope I'm fond of much that's good,
  As well as much that's gay;
I'd like the country if I could;
  I love the Park in May:
And when I ride in Rotten Row,
I wonder why they call'd it so.

A lively scene on turf and road;
  The crowd is bravely drest:
The *Ladies' Mile* has overflow'd,
  The chairs are in request:
The nimble air, so soft, so clear,
Can hardly stir a ringlet here.

I'll halt beneath those pleasant trees,—
  And drop my bridle-rein,
And, quite alone, indulge at ease
  The philosophic vein:

I'll moralize on all I see—
Yes, it was all arranged for me!

Forsooth, and on a livelier spot
The sunbeam never shines.
Fair ladies here can talk and trot
With statesmen and divines:
Could I have chosen, I'd have been
A Duke, a Beauty, or a Dean.

What grooms! What gallant gentlemen!
What well-appointed hacks!
What glory in their pace, and then
What Beauty on their backs!
My Pegasus would never flag
If weighted as my Lady's nag.

But where is now the courtly troop
That once rode laughing by?
I miss the curls of Cantilupe,
The laugh of Lady Di:
They all could laugh from night to morn,
And Time has laugh'd them all to scorn.

I then could frolic in the van
With dukes and dandy earls;
Then I was thought a *nice* young man
By rather *nice* young girls!
I've half a mnd to join Miss Browne,
And try one canter up and down.

Ah, no—I'll linger here awhile,
And dream of days of yore;
For me bright eyes have lost the smile,
The sunny smile they wore:—
Perhaps they say, what I'll allow,
That I'm not quite so handsome now.

1867.

LOULOU AND HER CAT.

He dropt a tear on Susan's bier,
He seem'd a most despairing Swain;
But bluer sky brought newer tie,
And—would he wish her back again?
The moments fly, and when we die,
Will Philly Thistletop complain?
She'll cry and sigh, and—dry her eye,
And let herself be woo'd again.

A KIND PROVIDENCE.

Good pastry is vended
In Cité Fadette;
Maison Pons can make splendid
Brioche and *galette.*

M'sieu Pons is so fat that
He's laid on the shelf;
Madame had a Cat that
Was fat as herself.

Long hair, soft as satin,
A musical purr,
'Gainst the window she'd flatten
Her delicate fur.

I drove Lou to see what
Our neighbours were at,—
In rapture, cried she, "What
An exquisite Cat!

"What whiskers! She's purring
All over. Regale
Our eyes, *Puss*, by stirring
Thy feathery tail!

"*M'sieu Pons*, will you sell her?"
"*Ma femme est sortie*,
Your offer I'll tell her;
But—will she?" says he.

Yet *Pons* was persuaded
To part with the prize:
(Our bargain was aided,
My Lou, by your eyes!)

From his *légitime* save him,
My spouse I prefer,
For I warrant *his* gave him
Un mauvais quart d'heure.

I am giving a pleasant
Grimalkin to Lou,
—Ah, *Puss*, what a present
I'm giving to you !

THE SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD.

The characters of great and small
Come ready made, we can't bespeak one;
Their sides are many, too, and all
(Except ourselves) have got a weak one.
Some sanguine people love for life,
Some love their hobby till it flings them.
How many love a pretty wife
For love of the *éclat* she brings them!

* * * *

A little to relieve my mind
I've thrown off this disjointed chatter,
But more because I'm disinclined
To enter on a painful matter:
Once I was bashful; I'll allow
I've blush'd for words untimely spoken;
I still am rather shy, and now . . .
And now the ice is fairly broken.

We all have secrets: you have one
Which mayn't be quite your charming spouse's;
We all lock up a Skeleton
In some grim chamber of our houses;
Familiars who exhaust their days
And nights in probing where our smart is;
And, who, for all their spiteful ways,
Are "silent, unassuming *Parties.*"

We hug this Phantom we detest,
Rarely we let it cross our portals:
It is a most exacting guest,
And we are much afflicted mortals.
Your neighbour Gay, that jovial wight,
As *Dives* rich, and brave as Hector,
Poor Gay steals twenty times a night,
On shaking knees, to see his Spectre.

Old *Dives* fears a pauper fate,
So hoarding is his ruling passion;—
Some gloomy souls anticipate
A waistcoat, straiter than the fashion!

She childless pines, that lonely wife,
And secret tears are bitter shedding;
Hector may tremble all his life,
And die,—but not of that he's dreading.

* * *

Ah me! the World! How fast it spins!
The bedams dance, the caldron bubbles;
They shriek, they stir it for our sins,
And we must drain it for our troubles.
We toil, we groan; the cry for love
Mounts up from this poor seething city,
And yet I know we have above
A FATHER, infinite in pity.

When Beauty smiles, when Sorrow weeps,
Where sunbeams play, where shadows darken,
One inmate of our dwelling keeps
Its ghastly carnival; but hearken!
How dry the rattle of the bones!
That sound was not to make *you* start meant:
Stand by! Your humble servant owns
The Tenant of this Dark Apartment.

AN INVITATION TO ROME, AND THE REPLY.

THE INVITATION.

Oh, come to Rome, it is a pleasant place,
Your London sun is here, and smiling brightly;
The Briton, too, puts on his cheery face,
And *Mrs. Bull* acquits herself politely.
The Romans are an easy-going race,
With simple wives, more dignified than sprightly;
I see them at their doors, as day is closing,
Prouder than duchesses, and more imposing.

A sweet *far niente* life promotes the graces;
They pass from dreamy bliss to wakeful glee,
And in their bearing and their speech, one traces
A breadth, a depth—a grace of courtesy
Not found in busy or inclement places;
Their clime and tongue are much in harmony:
The Cockney met in Middlesex, or Surrey,
Is often cold, and always in a hurry.

Oh, come to Rome, nor be content to read
Of famous palace and of stately street
Whose fountains ever run with joyful speed,
And never-ceasing murmur. Here we greet
Memnon's vast monolith; or, gay with weed,
Rich capitals, as corner-stone or seat,
The site of vanish'd temples, where now moulder
Old ruins, masking ruin even older.

Ay, come, and see the statues, pictures, churches,
Although the last are commonplace, or florid.—
Who say 'tis here that superstition perches?
Myself I'm glad the marbles have been quarried.
The sombre streets are worthy your researches
Tho' ways are foul, and lava pavement's horrid.
The pleasant sights, that squeamishness disparages,
Are miss'd by all who roll along in carriages.

I dare not speak of Michael Angelo,
Such theme were all too splendid for my pen:
And if I breathe the name of Sanzio
(The first of painters and of gentlemen,)

Is it that love casts out my fear, and so
I claim with him a kindredship? Ah, when
We love, the name is on our hearts engraven,
As is thy name, my own dear Bard of Avon.

Nor is the Coliseum theme of mine,
'Twas built for poet of a larger daring;
The world goes there with torches; I decline
Thus to affront the moonbeams with their flaring.
Some day in May our forces we'll combine
(Just you and I), and try a midnight airing.
And then I'll quote this rhyme to you—and then
You'll muse upon the vanity of men!

Come! We will charter such a pair of nags!
The country's better seen when one is riding:
We'll roam where yellow Tiber speeds or lags
At will. The aqueducts are yet bestriding
With giant march (now whole, now broken crags
With flowers plumed) the swelling and subsiding
Campagna, girt by purple hills afar,
That melt in light beneath the evening star.

A drive to Palestrina will be pleasant;
The wild fig grows where erst her rampart stood;
There oft, in goat-skin clad, a sunburnt peasant
Like Pan comes frisking from his ilex wood,
And seems to wake the past time in the present.
Fair *contadina*, mark his mirthful mood;
No antique satyr he. The nimble fellow
Can join with jollity your *saltarello*.

Old sylvan peace and liberty! The breath
Of life to unsophisticated man.
Here Mirth may pipe, Love here may weave his wreath,
"*Per dar' al mio bene.*" When you can,
Come share their leafy solitudes. Pale Death
And Time are grudging of our little span:
Wan Time speeds lightly o'er the changing corn,
Death grins from yonder cynical old thorn.

Oh, come! I send a leaf of April fern,
It grew where beauty lingers round decay:
Ashes long buried in a sculptured urn
Are not more dead than Rome—so dead to-day!

That better time, for which the patriots yearn,
Delights the gaze, again to fade away.
They wait, they pine for what is long denied,
And thus wait I till thou art by my side.

Thou'rt far away! Yet, while I write, I still
Seem gently, Sweet, to clasp thy hand in mine;
I cannot bring myself to drop the quill,
I cannot yet thy little hand resign!
The plain is fading into darkness chill,
The Sabine peaks are flush'd with light divine,
I watch alone, my fond thought wings to thee;
Oh, come to Rome. Oh come,—oh come to me!
1863.

THE REPLY.

Dear Exile, I was proud to get
Your rhyme, I've "laid it up in cotton;"
You know that you are all to "*Pet*,"—
I fear'd that I was quite forgotten!
Mamma, who scolds me when I mope,
Insists, and she is wise as gentle,

That I am still in love! I hope
That you feel rather sentimental!

Perhaps you think your *Love forlore*
Should pine unless her slave be with her
Of course you're fond of Rome, and more—
Of course you'd like to coax me thither!
Che! quit this dear delightful maze
Of calls and balls, to be intensely
Discomfited in fifty ways—
I like your confidence, immensely!

Some girls who love to ride and race,
And live for dancing, like the Bruens,
Confess that Rome's a charming place—
In spite of all the stupid ruins!
I think it might be sweet to pitch
One's tent beside those reeds of Tiber,
And all that sort of thing, of which
Dear Hawthorne's "quite" the best describer.

To see stone pines and marble gods
In garden alleys red with roses;

The Perch where Pio Nono nods ;
The Church where Raphael reposes.
Make pleasant *giros*—when we may ;
Jump *stagionate* (where they're easy !)
And play croquet ; the Bruens say
There's turf behind the Ludovisi !

I'll bring my books, though Mrs. Mee
Says packing books is such a worry ;
I'll bring my *Golden Treasury*,
Manzoni, and, of course, a "Murray !"
Your verses (if you so advise !)
A Dante—Auntie owns a quarto ;
I'll try and buy a smaller size,
And read him on the *Muro Torto*.

But can I go? *La Madre* thinks
It would be such an undertaking !
(I wish we could consult a sphinx !)
The very thought has left her quaking !
Papa (we do not mind papa)
Has got some "notice" of some "motion,"
And could not stay ; but, why not,—ah,
I've not the very slightest notion !

The Browns have come to stay a week,
They've brought the boys—I haven't thank'd 'em;
For Baby *Grand*, and Baby *Pic*,
Are playing cricket in my sanctum!
Your *Rover*, too, affects my den,
And when I pat the dear old whelp, it . .
It makes me think of *You*, and then . .
And then I cry—I cannot help it.

Ah yes, before you left me, ere
Our separation was impending,
These eyes had seldom shed a tear,
I thought my joy could have no ending!
But cloudlets gather'd soon, and this—
This was the first that rose to grieve me;—
To know that I possess'd the bliss,—
For then I knew such bliss might leave me!

My strain is sad, yet, oh, believe
Your words have made my spirit better;
And if, perhaps, at times I grieve,
I'd meant to write a cheery letter;

But skies were dull; Rome sounded hot,
I fancied I could live without it:
I thought I'd go, I thought I'd not,
And then I thought I'd think about it.

The sun now glances o'er the park,
If tears are on my cheek, they glitter;
I think I've kiss'd your rhyme, for hark,
My *bulley* gives a saucy twitter!
Your blessed words extinguish doubt,
A sudden breeze is gaily blowing;
And hark! The Minster bells ring out—
She ought to go. Of course she's going!

1863.

TO MY MISTRESS.

His musings were trite, and their burthen, forsooth,
The wisdom of age and the folly of youth.

Marquise, I see the flying year,
And feel how Time is wasting here:
Ay more, he soon his worst will do,
And garner all your roses too.

It pleases Time to fold his wings
Around our best and fairest things;
He'll mar your blooming cheek, as now
He stamps his mark upon my brow.

The same mute planets rise and shine
To rule your days and nights as mine:
Once I was young and gay, and see!
What I am now you soon will be.

And yet I vaunt a certain charm
That shields me from your worst alarm,
And bids me gaze, with front sublime,
On all these ravages of Time.

You boast a gift that blooms and dies,
I boast a gift that change defies:
For mine will still be mine, and last
When all your pride of beauty's past.

My gift will long embalm the lures
Of eyes—ah, beautiful as yours:
For ages hence the great and good
Will judge you as I choose they should.

In days to come the peer or clown,
With whom I still shall win renown,
Will only know that you were fair
Because I chanced to say you were.

Proud Lady! Scornful beauty mocks
At aged heads and silver locks;
But think awhile before you fly
Or spurn a Poet such as I.

KENWOOD; *July* 21, 1864.

CIRCUMSTANCE.

THE ORANGE.

It ripen'd by the river banks;
Where, mask and moonlight aiding,
Dons *Blas* and *Juan* play their pranks,
Dark Donnas serenading.

By Moorish damsel it was pluck'd,
Beneath the golden day there;
By swain 'twas then in London suck'd,
Who flung the peel away there.

He could not know in Pimlico,
As little she in Seville,
That *I* should reel upon that peel,
And—wish them at the devil.

1856.

YORICK'S FUNERAL.

* * * * *

That day, will there be one to shed
  A tear behind the hearse?
Or cry, "Poor *Yorick*, are you dead?
  I could have spared a worse:
We never spoke; we never met;
I never heard your voice, and yet
  I loved you for your verse?"
Such love would make the flowers wave
In gladness on their Poet's Grave.

A few, few years, like one short week,
  Will pass, and leave behind
A Stone moss-grown, that none will seek,
  And none would care to find.
Then I shall sleep, and gain release
In perfect rest—the perfect peace
  For which my soul has pined;
And still some Fool will laugh and weep—
A weary Fool who sues for sleep.

PICCADILLY.

Her eyes and her hair
Are superb;
She stands in despair
On the kerb.
Quick, Stranger, advance
To her aid:—
She's across, with a glance
You're repaid.
She's fair, and you're tall,
fal-lal-la!—
What will come of it all?
Chi lo sa!

CUPID ON THE CROSSING.

Piccadilly! Shops, palaces, bustle, and breeze,
The whirring of wheels, and the murmur of trees;
By night or by day, whether noisy or stilly,
Whatever my mood is, I love Piccadilly.

Wet nights, when the gas on the pavement is streaming,
And young Love is watching, and old Love is dreaming,

And Beauty is whirling to conquest, where shrilly
Cremona makes nimble thy toes, Piccadilly!

Bright days, when a stroll is my afternoon wont,
And I meet all the people I do know, or don't:
Here is jolly old Brown, and his fair daughter Lillie—
No wonder, young Pilgrim, you like Piccadilly!

See yonder pair riding, how fondly they saunter,
She smiles on her Poet, whose heart's in a canter!
Some envy her spouse, and some covet her filly,
He envies them both,—he's an ass, Piccadilly!

Now were I such a bride, with a slave at my feet,
I would choose me a house in my favourite street;
Yes or no—I would carry my point, willy-nilly:
If "no,"—pick a quarrel; if "yes,"—Piccadilly!

From Primrose balcony, long ages ago,
"Old Q." sat at gaze,—who now passes below?
A frolicsome statesman, the Man of the Day;
A laughing philosopher, gallant and gay;

Never darling of fortune more manfully trod,
Full of years, full of fame, and the world at his nod,
Can the thought reach his heart, and then leave it
more chilly—
Old P. or old Q.,—"I must quit Piccadilly"?

Life is chequer'd; a patchwork of smiles and of
frowns;
We value its ups, let us muse on its downs;
There's a side that is bright, it will then turn us
t'other,
One turn, if a good one, deserves yet another.
These downs are delightful, these ups are not
hilly,—
Let us turn one more turn ere we quit Piccadilly.

A *NICE* CORRESPONDENT.

"There are plenty of roses" (the patriarch speaks)
"Alas not for me, on your lips and your cheeks;
Fair maiden rose-laden enough and to spare,
Spare, spare me that rose that you wear in your hair."

The glow and the glory are plighted
To darkness, for evening is come;
The lamp in Glebe Cottage is lighted,
The birds and the sheep-bells are dumb.
I'm alone, for the others have flitted
To dine with a neighbour at Kew:
Alone, but I'm not to be pitied—
I'm thinking of you!

I wish you were here! Were I duller
Than dull, you'd be dearer than dear;
I am drest in your favourite colour—
Dear Fred, how I wish you were here!

I am wearing my lazuli necklace,
The necklace you fasten'd askew!
Was there ever so rude or so reckless
A Darling as you?

I want you to come and pass sentence
On two or three books with a plot;
Of course you know "Janet's Repentance?"
I am reading Sir *Waverley* Scott.
That story of Edgar and Lucy,
How thrilling, romantic, and true!
The Master (his bride *was* a goosey!)
Reminds me of you.

They tell me Cockaigne has been crowning
A Poet whose garland endures;—
It was you that first told me of Browning,—
That stupid old Browning of yours!
His vogue and his verve are alarming,
I'm anxious to give him his due,
But, Fred, he's not nearly so charming
A Poet as you!

I heard how you shot at The Beeches,
I saw how you rode *Chanticleer*,
I have read the report of your speeches,
And echo'd the echoing cheer;
There's a whisper of hearts you are breaking,
Dear Fred, I believe it, I do!
Small marvel that Folly is making.
Her Idol of you!

Alas for the World, and its dearly
Bought triumph,—its fugitive bliss;
Sometimes I half wish I were merely
A plain or a penniless Miss;
But, perhaps, one is best with "a measure
Of pelf," and I'm not sorry, too,
That I'm pretty, because it's a pleasure,
My Darling, to you!

Your whim is for frolic and fashion,
Your taste is for letters and art;—
This rhyme is the commonplace passion
That glows in a fond woman's heart:

Lay it by in some sacred deposit
For relics—we all have a few!
Love, some day they'll print it, because it
Was written to You.

1868.

MY SONG.

You ask a Song,
Such as of yore, an autumn's eventide,
Some blest Boy-Poet caroll'd,—and then died.
Nay, *I* have sung too long.

Say, shall I fling
A sigh to Beauty at her window-pane?
I sang there once, may not I once again?
Or tell me whom to sing.

—The peer of Peers?
Lord of the wealth that gives his time employ?
Time to possess, but hardly to enjoy—
He cannot need *my* tears.

—The man of *Mind*,
Or Priest, who darkens what was never day?
I cannot sing them, yet I will not say
Such guides are wholly blind.

—The Orator?
He quiet lies where yon fresh hillock heaves
'Twere well to sprinkle there those laurel-leaves
He won, but never wore.

Or shall I twine
The Cypress? Wreath of glory and of gloom.—
To march a gallant Soldier to his doom
Needs fuller voice than mine.

No Lay have I,
No murmur'd measure meet for your delight,
No Song of Love and Death, to make you quite
Forget that we must die.

Something is wrong;
The World is over-wise; or, more's the pity,
These days are far too serious for a Ditty,
Yet take it,—take My Song.

1876.

REPLY TO A LETTER ENCLOSING A LOCK OF HAIR.

She laugh'd—she climb'd the giddy height;
I held that climber small;
I even held her rather tight,
For fear that she should fall.
A dozen girls were chirping round,
Like five-and-twenty linnets;—
I must have held her, I'll be bound,
Some five-and-twenty minutes.

1.

Yes, you were false, and, though I'm free,
I still would be that slave of yore;
Then, join'd, our years were thirty-three,
And now,—yes now I'm thirty-four.
And though you were not learnèd . . . well,
I was not anxious you should grow so;—
I trembled once beneath her spell
Whose spelling was extremely so-so.

Bright season! why will Memory
Still haunt the path our rambles took;
The sparrow's nest that made you cry,
The lilies captured in the brook?
I'd lifted you from side to side,
You seem'd as light as that poor sparrow;
I know who wish'd it twice as wide,—
I think *you* thought it rather narrow.

Time was, indeed a little while,
My pony could your heart compel;
And once, beside the meadow-stile,
I thought you loved me just as well;
I'd kiss'd your cheek; in sweet surprise
Your troubled gaze said plainly, "Should he?"
But doubt soon fled those daisy eyes,—
"He could not mean to vex me, could he?"

The brightest eyes are soonest sad,
But your rose cheek, so lightly sway'd,
Could ripple into dimples glad;
For oh, fair Friend, what mirth we made!

The brightest tears are soonest dried,
But your young love and dole were stable;
You wept when dear old *Rover* died,
You wept—and dress'd your dolls in sable.

As year succeeds to year, the more
Imperfect life's fruition seems;
Our dreams, as baseless as of yore,
Are not the same enchanting dreams.
The girls I love now vote me slow,
How dull the boys who once seem'd witty!
Perhaps I'm growing old, I know
I'm still romantic, more's the pity.

Vain the regret! To few, perchance,
Unknown, and profitless to all:
The wisely-gay, as years advance,
Are gaily-wise. Whate'er befall,
We'll laugh at folly, whether seen
Beneath a chimney or a steeple;
At yours, at mine—our own, I mean,
As well as that of other people.

I'm fond of fun, the mental dew
  Where wit, and truth, and ruth are blent;
And yet I've known a prig or two,
  Who, wanting all, were all content!
To say I hate such dismal men
  Might be esteem'd a strong assertion;
If I've blue devils, now and then,
  I make them dance for my diversion.

And here's your letter debonair—
  "*My Friend, my dear old Friend of yore,*
And is this curl your daughter's hair?
  I've seen the Titian tint before.
Are we the pair that used to pass
  Long days beneath the chestnut shady?
You then were such a pretty lass;
  I'm told you're now as fair a lady.

* * * *

I've laugh'd to hide the tear I shed,
  As when the jester's bosom swells,
And mournfully he shakes his head,
  We hear the jingle of his bells.

A jesting vein your poet vex'd,
And this poor rhyme, the Fates determine,
Without a parson or a text,
Has proved a rather prosy sermon.

1859.

A RHYME OF ONE.

They tell me I was born a long
Three months ago,
But whether they be right or wrong
I hardly know.
I sleep, I smile, I cannot crawl,
But I can cry:
At present I am rather small—
A Babe am I.

The changing lights of sun and shade
Are baby toys;
The flowers and birds are not afraid
Of baby-boys.
Some day I'll wish that I could be
A bird and fly;
At present I can't wish—you see
A Babe am I.

You sleep upon your mother's breast,
Your race begun,
A welcome, long a wish'd-for Guest,
Whose age is One.

A Baby-Boy, you wonder why
You cannot run;
You try to talk—how hard you try!
You're only One.

Ere long you won't be such a dunce;
You'll eat your bun,
And fly your kite, like folk, who once
Were only One.

You'll rhyme and woo, and fight and joke,
Perhaps you'll pun!
Such feats are never done by folk
Before they're One.

Some day, too, you may have your joy,
And envy none;
Yes, you, yourself, may own a Boy,
Who isn't One.

He'll dance, and laugh, and crow; he'll do
As you have done:
(You crown a happy home, though you
Are only One).

But when he's grown shall you be here
To share his fun,
And talk of times when he (the Dear!)
Was hardly One?

Dear Child, 'tis your poor lot to be
My little Son;
I'm glad, though I am old, you see,—
While you are One.

1876.

LITTLE DINKY.

(A RHYME OF LESS THAN ONE.)

Yes, there they lie, so small, so quaint,
Two mouths, two noses, and two chins;
What Painter shall we get to paint
And glorify the Twins?
To give us all the charm that dwells
In tiny cloaks and coral-bells,
And all those other pleasant spells
Of Babyhood, and not forget
The silver mug for either Pet—
No babe should be without it!
Come, Fairy Limner! you can thrill
Our hearts with pink and daffodil,
And white rosette, and dimpled frill;
Come, paint our little Jack and Jill,
And don't be long about it.

The hair she means to have is gold,
Her eyes are blue, she's twelve weeks old,
Plump are her fists and pinky.
She flutter'd down in lucky hour
From some blue deep in yon sky bower—
I call her LITTLE DINKY.

A Tiny now, ere long she'll please
To totter at my parent-knees,
And crow, and try to chatter:
And soon she'll come to fair white frocks,
And frisk about in shoes and socks,—
Her totter changed to patter.

And soon she'll play, ay, soon enough,
At cowslip-ball and blindman's-buff;
And, some day, we shall find her
Grow weary of her toys, indeed
She'll fling them all aside to heed
A footstep close behind her!

As time runs on she'll still be rich
In much that's left, the joys with which
Our love can aye supply us;
For hand in hand we'll sit us down
Right cheerfully, and let the town—
This foolish town, go by us.

Dinky, we must resign our toys
To younger girls, to finer boys,
But we'll not care a feather,

For then (reflection's not regret)
Though you'll *be rather old! we'll yet*
Be Boy and Girl together.

* * *

As I was climbing Ludgate Hill
I met a goose that dropt a quill,
You see my thumb is inky;
I fell to scribble there and then,
And this is how I came to pen,
These rhymes on LITTLE DINKY.

1878.

ANY POET TO HIS LOVE.

Immortal Verse! Is mine the strain
To last and live? As ages wane
What hand for me will twine the bays?
Who'll praise me then as now you praise?

Will there be one to praise? Ah no!
My laurel leaf may never grow;
My bust is in the quarry yet,
Oblivion weaves my coronet.

Immortal for a month—a week!
The garlands wither as I speak;
The song will die, the harp's unstrung,
But, singing, have I vainly sung?

You deign'd to lend an ear the while
I trill'd my lay. I won your smile.
Now, let it die, or let it live,—
My verse was all I had to give.

The linnet flies on wistful wings;
And finds a bower, and lights and sings;
Enough if my poor verse endures
To light and live—to die in yours.

1875.

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

A friendly bird with bosom red
  Is fluting near my garden seat;
Your sky is fair above my head,
  And Tweed rejoices at my feet.

The squirrels gambol in the oak,
  Here, all is glad, but you prefer
To linger on amid the smoke
  Of stony-hearted Westminster.

Again I read your letter through,—
  "*How wonderful is fate's decree,*
How sweet is all your life to you,
  And oh, how sad is mine to me."

I know your wail, who knows it not?—
  He gave,—He taketh that He gave.
Yours is the lot, the common lot,
  To go down weeping to the grave.

Sad journey to a dark abyss,
Meet ending of your sorrow keen,—
The burden of my dirge is this,
And this my woe,—*It might have been!*

Dear bird! Blithe bird that singst in frost,
Forgive my friend if he is sad;
He mourns what he has only lost,—
I weep what I have never had.

LEES, *September* 27, 1873.

THE CUCKOO.

We heard it calling, clear and low,
That tender April morn; we stood
And listened in the quiet wood,
We heard it, ay, long years ago.

It came, and with a strange, sweet cry,
A friend, but from a far-off land;
We stood and listened, hand in hand,
And heart to heart, my Love and I.

In dreamland then we found our joy,
And so it seeem'd as 'twere the Bird
That Helen in old times had heard
At noon beneath the oaks of Troy.

O time far off, and yet so near!
It came to her in that hush'd grove,
It warbled while the wooing throve,
It sang the song she liked to hear.

And now I hear its voice again,
And still its message is of peace,
It sings of love that will not cease—
For me it never sings in vain.

TO LINA OSWALD.

(AGED FIVE YEARS.)

I tumble out of bed betimes
To make my love these toddling rhymes;
And meet the hour, and meet the place
To bless her blithe good-morning face.
I send her all this heart can store;
I seem to see her as before,
An angel-child, divinely fair,
With meek blue eyes, and golden hair,
Curls tipt with changing light, that shed
A little glory round her head.

Has poet ever sung or seen a
Sweeter, wiser child than Lina?
Blue are her sash and snood, and blue's
The hue of her bewitching shoes;
But, saving these, she's virgin dight,
A happy creature clad in white.

Again she stands beneath the boughs,
Reproves the pup, and feeds the cows;
Unvexed by rule, unscared by ill,
She wanders at her *own sweet will*;
For what grave fiat could confine
My little charter'd libertine,
Yet free from feeling or from seeing
The burthen of her moral being?

But change must come, and forms and dyes
Will change before her changing eyes;
She'll learn to blush, and hope, and fear—
And where shall I be then, my dear?

Little gossip, set apart
But one small corner of thy heart;
There still is one not quite employ'd,
So let me find and fill that void;
Run then, and jump, and laugh, and play,
But love me though I'm far away.

BROOMHALL, *September*, 1868.

MY MISTRESS'S BOOTS.

She has dancing eyes and ruby lips,
Delightful boots—and away she skips.

They nearly strike me dumb,—
I tremble when they come
Pit-a-pat:
This palpitation means
These Boots are Geraldine's—
Think of that!

O, where did hunter win
So delicate a skin
For her feet?
You lucky little kid,
You perish'd, so you did,
For my Sweet.

The faery stitching gleams
On the sides, and in the seams,
And reveals

That the Pixies were the wags
Who tipt these funny tags,
And these heels.

What soles to charm an elf!—
Had Crusoe, sick of self,
Chanced to view
One printed near the tide,
O, how hard he would have tried
For the two!

For Gerry's debonair,
And innocent and fair
As a rose;
She's an Angel in a frock,—
She's an Angel with a clock
To her hose!

The simpletons who squeeze
Their pretty toes to please
Mandarins,
Would positively flinch
From venturing to pinch
Geraldine's.

Cinderella's *lefts and rights*
To Geraldine's were frights:
And I trow
The Damsel, deftly shod,
Has dutifully trod
Until now.

Come, Gerry, since it suits
Such a pretty Puss (in Boots)
These to don,
Set your dainty hand awhile
On my shoulder, Dear, and I'll
Put them on.

ALBURY: *June* 29, 1864.

THE REASON WHY.

Ask why I love the roses fair,
And whence they come and whose they were;
They come from her, and not alone,—
They bring her sweetness with their own.

Or ask me why I love her so;
I know not: this is all I know,
These roses bud and bloom, and twine
As she round this fond heart of mine.

And this is why I love the flowers,
Once they were hers, they're mine—they're ours!
I love her, and they soon will die,
And now you know the Reason Why.

A WINTER FANTASY.

Your veil is thick, and none would know
  The pretty face it quite obscures;
But if you foot it through the snow,
  Distrust those little boots of yours.

The tell-tale snow, a sparkling mould,
  Says where they go and whence they came,
Lightly they touch its carpet cold,
  And where they touch they sign your name.

She pass'd beneath yon branches bare:
  How fair her face, and how content!
I only know her face was fair,—
  I only know she came and went.

Pipe, robins, pipe; though boughs be bleak
  Ye are her winter choristers;
Whose cheek will press that rose-cold cheek?
  What lips those fresh young lips of hers?

THE HOUSEMAID.

Wistful she stands—and yet, resign'd,
She watches by the window-blind:
Poor Girl. No doubt
The passers-by despise thy lot:
Thou canst not stir, because 'tis not
Thy *Sunday out.*

To play a game of hide and seek
With dust and cobweb all the week
Small pleasure yields:
Oh dear, how nice it were to drop
One's pen and ink—one's pail and mop;
And scour the fields.

Poor Bodies few such pleasures know;
Seldom they come. How soon they go!
But Souls, can roam;

For, lapt in visions airy-sweet,
She sees in this unlovely street
Her far-off home.

The street is now no street! She pranks
A purling brook with thymy banks.
In Faney's realm
Yon post supports no lamp, aloof
It spreads above her parents' roof,—
A gracious elm.

A father's aid, a mother's care,
And life for her was happy there:
But here, in thrall
She waits, and dreams, and fondly dreams,
And fondly smiles on one who seems
More dear than all.

Her dwelling-place I can't disclose!
Suppose her fair, her name suppose
Is *Car*, or *Kitty*;
She may be *Jane*—she might be plain—
For must the Subject of my strain
Be always pretty?

* * *

Oft on a cloudless afternoon
Of budding May and leafy June,
Fit Sunday weather,
I pass thy window by design,
And wish thy Sunday out and mine
Might fall together.

For sweet it were thy lot to dower
With one brief joy: a white-robed flower
That prude or preacher
Hardly could deem it were unmeet
To lay on thy poor path, thou sweet,
Forlorn young Creature.

* * *

But if her thought on wooing run
And if her Sunday-Swain is one
Who's fond of strolling,
She'd like my nonsense less than his,
And so it's better as it is—
And that's consoling.

1864.

HEINE TO HIS MISTRESS.

What do the violets ail,
So wan, so shy?
Why are the roses pale?
Oh why? Oh why?

The lark sad music makes
To sullen skies;
From yonder flowery brakes
Dead odours rise.

Why is the sun's new birth
A dawn of gloom
Oh why is this fair earth
My joyless tomb?

I wait apart and sigh,
I call to thee;
Why, Heart's-belovèd, why
Didst thou leave me?

1876.

THE BEAR PIT.

IN THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

It seems that poor Bruin has never had peace
'Twixt bald men in Bethel, and wise men in grease.
OLD ADAGE.

We liked the Bear's serio-comical face,
As he loll'd with a lazy, a lumbering grace;
Said Slyboots to me (as if *she* had got none),
"Papa, let's give Bruin a bit of your bun."

Says I, "A plum bun might please wistful old Bruin,
He can't eat the stone that the cruel boy threw in;
Stick *yours* on the point of mamma's parasol,
And then he will climb to the top of the pole.

"Some Bears have got two legs, and some have got more,
Be good to old Bears if they've no legs or four;

Of duty to age you should never be careless,—
My dear, I am bald, and I soon may be hairless!

"The gravest aversion exists among Bears
From rude forward persons who give themselves airs,
We know how some graceless young people were maul'd
For plaguing a Prophet, and calling him *bald*.

"Strange ursine devotion! Their dancing-days ended,
Bears die to '*remove*' what, in life, they defended:
They succour'd the Prophet, and, since that affair,
The bald have a painful regard for the bear."

My MORAL! Small people may read it, and run.
(The Child has my moral—the Bear has my bun.)

THE OLD STONEMASON.

A showery day in early spring,
  An Old Man and a Child
Are seated near a scaffolding,
  Where marble blocks are piled.

His clothes are stain'd by age and soil,
  As hers by rain and sun;
He looks as if his days of toil
  Were very nearly done.

To eat his dinner he had sought
  A staircase proud and vast,
And here the duteous Child had brought
  His scanty noon repast.

A worn-out Workman needing aid;
  A blooming Child of Light;
The stately palace steps;—all made
  A most pathetic sight.

We had sought shelter from the storm,
And saw this lowly Pair,—
But none could see a Shining Form
That watch'd beside them there.

1874.

THE MUSIC PALACE.

Shall you go? I don't ask you to seek it or shun it;
I went on an impulse: I've been and I've done it.

So this is a Music-hall, easy and free,
A temple for singing, and dancing, and *spree;*
The band is at *Faust*, and the benches are filling,
And all that I have can be had for a shilling.

The senses are charm'd by the sights and the sounds;
A spirit of affable gladness abounds:
With zest we applaud, and as madly recall
The singer, the *cellar-flap-dancer*, and all.

What vision comes on with a wreath and a lyre?
A creature of impulse in scanty attire;
She plays the good sprite in a dream-haunted dell,
She has ankles! and eyes like a wistful gazelle.

A clown sings a song, and a droll cuts a caper,
And then she dissolves in a rose-colour'd vapour:
Then an imp on a rope is a painfully-pleasant
Sensation for all the mammas that are present.

But who is the Damsel that smiles to me there
With so reckless, indeed, so defiant an air?
She is bright—that she's pretty is more than I'll say.
Is she happy? At least she's exceedingly gay.

* * * * *

It seems to me now, as we pass up the street,
Is Nell worse than I, or the worthies we meet?
She is reckless, her conduct's exceedingly sad—
A coin may be light, but it need not be bad.

Heaven help thee, poor Child: now a graceless and gay Thing,
You once were your Mother's, her pet and her plaything:
Where was your home? Are the stars that look down
On that home, the cold stars of this pitiless Town?

The stars are a riddle we never may read,
I prest her poor hand, and I bade her *Godspeed!*
She left me a heart overladen with sorrow—
You may hear Nelly's laugh at the palace to-
morrow!

Ah! some go to revel, and some go to rue,
For some go to ruin. There's Paul's tolling two.

MRS. SMITH.

Heigh-ho! they're wed. The cards are dealt,
Our frolic games are o'er;
I've laugh'd, and fool'd, and loved. I've felt—
As I shall feel no more!
Yon little thatch is where she lives,
Yon spire is where she met me;—
I think that if she quite forgives,
She cannot quite forget me.

Last year I trod these fields with Di,—
Fields fresh with clover and with rye;
They now seem arid:
Then Di was fair and single; how
Unfair it seems on me, for now
Di's fair—and married!

A blissful swain—I scorn'd the song
Which tells us though young Love is strong,
The Fates are stronger:
Then breezes blew a boon to men,
The buttercups were bright, and then
This grass was longer.

That day I saw and much esteem'd
Di's ankles, that the clover seem'd
Inclined to smother:
It twitch'd, and soon untied (for fun)
The ribbon of her shoes, first one,
And then the other.

I'm told that virgins augur some
Misfortune if their shoe-strings come
To grief on *Friday*:
And so did Di,—and then her pride
Decreed that shoe-strings so untied
Are "so untidy!"

Of course I knelt; with fingers deft
I tied the right, and tied the left:
Says Di, "This stubble
Is very stupid!—as I live
I'm quite ashamed!... I'm shock'd to give
You so much trouble!"

For answer I was fain to sink
To what we all would say and think
Were Beauty present:

"Don't mention such a simple act—
A trouble? not the least! In fact
It's rather pleasant!"

I trust that Love will never tease
Poor little Di, or prove that he's
A graceless rover.
She's happy now as *Mrs. Smith*—
And less polite when walking with
Her chosen lover!

Heigh-ho! Although no moral clings
To Di's blue eyes, and sandal strings,
We've had our quarrels.
I think that Smith is thought an ass,—
I know that when they walk in grass
She wears *balmorals*.

1864.

THE OLD GOVERNMENT CLERK.

(OLD STYLE.)

We knew an old Scribe, it was "once on a time,"
An era to set sober datists despairing:
Then let them despair! Darby sat in a chair
Near the Cross that took name from the Village of Charing.

Though silent and lean, Darby was not malign,
What hair he had left was more silver than sable;
He had also contracted a curve in the spine,
From bending too constantly over a table.

His pay and expenditure, quite in accord,
Were both on the strictest economy founded;
His rulers were known as the Sealing-wax Board,—
They ruled where red-tape and snug places abounded.

In his heart he look'd down on this dignified Knot;
And why? The forefather of one of these senators—
A rascal concern'd in the Gunpowder Plot—
Had been barber-surgeon to Darby's progenitors.

Poor fool! is not life a vagary of luck?
For thirty long years of genteel destitution
He'd been writing despatches; which means he had stuck
Some heads and some tails to much circumlocution.

This sounds rather weary and dreary; but, no!
Though strictly inglorious, his days were quiescent;
His red-tape was tied in a true-lover's bow
Every night when returning to Rosemary Crescent.

There Joan meets him smiling, the Young Ones are there;
His coming is bliss to the half-dozen wee Things;

The dog and the cat have a greeting to spare,
And Phyllis, neat-handed, is laying the tea-things.

East wind, sob eerily! Sing, kettle, cheerily!
Baby's abed, but its Father will rock it;—
His little ones boast their permission to toast
The cake that good fellow brings home in his pocket.

This greeting the silent Old Clerk understands,
Now his friends he can love, had he foes he could mock them;
So met, so surrounded, his bosom expands,—
Some hearts have more need of such homes to unlock them.

And Darby at least is resign'd to his lot;
And Joan, rather proud of the sphere he's adorning,
Has well-nigh forgotten that Gunpowder Plot,—
And *he* won't recall it till ten the next morning.

A day must be near when, in pitiful case,
He will drop from his *Branch*, like a fruit more
than mellow;
Is he yet to be found in his usual place?
Or is he already forgotten? Poor Fellow!

If still at his duty he soon will arrive;
He passes this turning because it is shorter;
He always is here as the clock's going five!—
Where is He? . . Ah, it is chiming the quarter!

1856.

GERALDINE GREEN.

I.

THE SERENADE.

Light slumber is quitting
The eyelids it prest;
The fairies are flitting,
Who lull'd thee to rest.
Where night dews were falling,
Now feeds the wild bee;
The starling is calling,
My Darling, for thee.

The wavelets are crisper
That thrill the shy fern;
The leaves fondly whisper,
"We wait thy return."

Arise then, and hazy
Regrets from thee fling,
For sorrows that crazy
To-morrows may bring.

A vague yearning smote us,
But wake not to weep;
My bark, Love, shall float us,
Across the still deep,
To isles where the lotus
Erst lull'd thee to sleep.

II.

MY LIFE IS A ——.

At Worthing, an exile from Geraldine G——,
How aimless, how wretched an Exile is he!
Promenades are not even prunella and leather
To lovers, if lovers can't foot them together.

He flies the parade, by the ocean he stands;
He traces a "Geraldine G." on the sands;
Only "G.!" though her loved patronymic is "Green,"—
"I will not betray thee, my own Geraldine."

The fortunes of men have a time and a tide,
And Fate, the old Fury, will not be denied;
That name was, of course, soon wiped out by the sea,—
She jilted the Exile, did Geraldine G.

They meet, but they never have spoken since that;
He hopes she is happy,—he knows she is fat;
She woo'd on the shore, now is wed in the Strand;
And *I*—it was I wrote her name on the sand.

1854.

DU RYS DE MADAME D'ALLEBRET.

How fair those locks which now the light-wind stirs!
What eyes she has, and what a perfect arm!
And yet methinks that little Laugh of hers—
That little Laugh is still her crowning charm.
Where'er she passes, countryside or town,
The streets make festa, and the fields rejoice.
Should sorrow come, as 't will, to cast me down,
Or Death, as come he must, to hush my voice,
Her Laugh would wake me, just as now it thrills me—
That little giddy Laugh wherewith she kills me.

THE LADY I LOVE.

The Lady I sing is as charming as Spring,
I own that I love the dear Lady I sing:
She is gay, she is sad, she is good, she is fair,
She lives at a Number in O— — — Square.

It is not 21, it is not 23—
You never shall get at her Number from me;
If you did, very soon you'd be mounting the stair
Of Number (no matter what!) O— — — Square.

They say she is clever. Indeed it is said
She is making a Novel right out of her Head!
That poor little Head! If her Heart were to spare
I'd break, and I'd mend it in O— — — Square.

I've a heart of my own, and, in prose as in rhymes,
This heart has been fractured a good many times;
An excellent heart, tho' in sorry repair—
Little Friend, may I mend it in O— — — *Square?*

"*What nonsense you talk.*" Yes, but still I am one
Who feels pretty grave when he seems full of fun;
Some people are pretty, and yet full of care—
And Some One is pretty in O— — — Square.

I know I am singing in old-fashion'd phrase
The music that pleased in the old-fashion'd days;
Alas, I know, too, I've an old-fashion'd air—
Oh, why did I ever see O— — — Square!

POSTSCRIPT.

The writer of prose, by intelligence taught,
Says the thing that will please, in the way that he ought,
But your poor despised Bard, who by Nature is blest,
(In the scope of a couplet, or guise of a jest,)
Says the thing that he pleases as pleases him best.

THE JESTER'S MORAL.

Is Human Life a pleasant game
  That gives the palm to all?
A fight for fortune, or for fame,
  A struggle, and a fall?
Who views the Past, and all he prized,
  With tranquil exultation?
And who can say—*I've realized*
  My fondest aspiration?

Alack, not one. No, rest assured
  That all are prone to quarrel
With Fate, when worms destroy their gourd,
  Or mildew spoils their laurel:
The prize may come to cheer our lot,
  But all too late; and granted
If even better, still it's not
  Exactly what we wanted.

My schoolboy time! I wish to praise
That bud of brief existence;
The vision of my younger days
Now trembles in the distance.
An envious vapour lingers here,
And there I find a chasm;
But much remains, distinct and clear,
To sink enthusiasm.

Such thoughts just now disturb my soul
With reason good, for lately
I took the train to Marley-knoll,
And cross'd the fields to Mately.
I found old Wheeler at his gate,
Who once rare sport could show me,
My Mentor wise on springe and bait—
But Wheeler did not know me.

"Good lord!" at last exclaim'd the churl,
"Are you the little chap, sir,
What used to train his hair in curl,
And wore a scarlet cap, sir?"

And then he took to fill in blanks,
And conjure up old faces;
And talk of well-remember'd pranks
In half-forgotten places.

It pleased the man to tell his brief
And rather mournful story,—
Old Bliss's school had come to grief,
And Bliss had "gone to glory."
Fell'd were his trees, his house was razed,
And what less keenly pain'd me,
A venerable Donkey grazed
Exactly where he caned me.

And where have school- and playmate sped,
Whose ranks were once so serried?
Why some are wed, and some are dead,
And some are only buried;
Frank Petre, erst so full of fun,
Is now *St. Blaise's* Prior,
And Travers, the attorney's son,
Is member for the shire.

Dull maskers we. Life's festival
Enchants the blithe new-comer;
But seasons change;—then where are all
Those friendships of our summer?
Wan pilgrims flit athwart our track,
Cold looks attend the meeting;
We only greet them, glancing back,
Or pass without a greeting.

Old Bliss I owe some rubs, but pride
Constrains me to postpone 'em,—
Something he taught me, ere he died,
About *nil nisi bonum*.
I've met with wiser, better men,
But I forgive him wholly;
Perhaps his jokes were sad, but then
He used to storm so drolly.

"*I still can laugh*" is still my boast,
But mirth has sounded gayer;
And which provokes my laughter most,
The preacher or the player?

Alack, I cannot laugh at what
Once made us laugh so freely;
For Nestroy and Grassot are not;
And where is Mr. Keeley?

I'll join *St. Blaise* (a verseman fit,
More fit than I, once did it)
—*I* shave my crown? No, Common-Wit,
And Common-Sense forbid it.
I'd sooner dress your Little Miss
As Paulet shaves his poodles!
As soon propose for Betsy Bliss,
Or get proposed for *Boodle's*.

We prate of Life's illusive dyes,
And yet fond Hope misleads us;
We all believe we near the prize,
Till some fresh dupe succeeds us!
And yet, though Life's a riddle, though
No Clerk has yet explain'd it,
I still can hope; for well I know
That Love has thus ordain'd it.

PARIS, *November*, 1864.

NOTES.

"A HUMAN SKULL."

"In our last month's Magazine you may remember there were some verses about a portion of a skeleton. Did you remark how the poet and present proprietor of the human skull at once settled the sex of it, and determined off-hand that it must have belonged to a woman? Such skulls are locked up in many gentlemen's hearts and memories. Bluebeard, you know, had a whole museum of them—as that imprudent little last wife of his found out to her cost. And, on the other hand, a lady, we suppose, would select hers of the sort which had carried beards when in the flesh."—*Adventures of Philip on his Way through the World. Cornhill Magazine, January,* 1861.

"St. James's Street."

I hope my readers, whoever they may be, will not credit me with all the sentiments expressed in this volume. I am told that these lines have disturbed some Americans, but surely without cause. The remark in the seventh stanza is natural in the mouth of a rather exclusive habitué of St. James's, who has the mortification to feel that he is no longer young, who is too shallow-minded to appreciate our advance in civilization during the last forty years, but who is nevertheless sufficiently keen to see what is possible in the future. My friends know I have a sincere admiration for the American people.

"A Garden Lyric."

When these verses appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* they ran as follows, but many of my readers could not see the point, and others, seeing it, disliked it so heartily, that I altered them in sheer vexation; now they have two readings, and can take their choice.

GERALDINE AND I.

Di te, Damasippe deæque
Verum ob consilium donent tonsore.

I have talk'd with her often in noon-day heat,
We have walk'd under wintry skies;
Her voice is the dearest voice, and sweet
Is the light in her gentle eyes;
It is bliss in the silent woods, among
Gay crowds, or in any place,
To mould her mind, to gaze in her young
Confiding face.

For ever may roses divinely blow,
And wine-dark pansies charm
By that prim box path where I felt the glow
Of her dimpled, trusting arm,
And the sweep of her silk as she turn'd and smiled
A smile as fair as her pearls;
The breeze was in love with the darling Child,
And coax'd her curls.

She show'd me her ferns and woodbine sprays,
Foxglove and jasmine stars,
A mist of blue in the beds, a blaze
Of red in the celadon jars:
And velvety bees in convolvulus bells,
And roses of bountiful S[illegible]
But I said—"Though roses and bees have spells,
They have thorn and sting,"

She show'd me ripe peaches behind a net
As fine as her veil, and fat
Gold fish a-gape, who lazily met
For her crumbs—I grudged them that!
A squirrel, some rabbits with long lop ears,
And guinea-pigs, tortoise-shell—wee;
And I told her that eloquent truth inheres
In all we see.

I lifted her doe by its lops, quoth I,
"Even here deep meaning lies,—
Why have squirrels these ample tails, and why
Have rabbits these prominent eyes?"
She smiled and said, as she twirl'd her veil,
"For some nice little cause, no doubt—
If you lift a guinea-pig up by the tail
His eyes drop out!"

1868.

"To My Mistress."

M. Deschanel quotes the following charming little poem by Corneille, addressed to a young lady who had not been quite civil to him. He says with truth—"Le sujet est léger, le rhythme court, mais on y retrouve la fierté de l'homme, et aussi l'ampleur du tragique." The last four

stanzas, in particular, are brimful of spirit, and the mixture of pride and vanity they display is remarkable.

"Marquise, si mon visage
A quelques traits un peu vieux,
Souvenez-vous, qu'à mon âge
Vous ne vaudrez guère mieux.

"Le temps aux plus belles choses
Se plaît à faire un affront,
Et saura faner vos roses
Comme il a ridé mon front.

"Le même cours des planètes
Règle nos jours et nos nuits
On m'a vu ce que vous êtes,
Vous serez ce que je suis.

"Cependant j'ai quelques charmes
Qui sont assez éclatants
Pour n'avoir pas trop d'alarmes
De ces ravages du temps.

"Vous en avez qu'on adore,
Mais ceux que vous méprisez
Pourraient bien durer encore
Quand ceux-là seront usés.

"Ils pourront sauver la gloire
Des yeux qui me semblent doux,

Et dans mille ans faire croire
Ce qu'il me plaira de vous.

"Chez cette race nouvelle
Où j'aurai quelque crédit,
Vous ne passerez pour belle
Qu'autant que je l'aurai dit.

"Pensez-y, belle Marquise,
Quoiqu'un grison fasse effroi,
Il vaut qu'on le courtise
Quand il est fait comme moi."

"A *Nice* Correspondent."

Ere long, perhaps in the next generation, the word NICE, and some other equally common words, may have passed into the limbo of *elegant*, *genteel*, &c. Fashions change, and certain words sink in the scale of gentility, and pass, like houses, into the hands of humbler proprietors. But what can poor poets do!

"A Winter Fantasy."

Imitated from Théophile Gautier.

"Du Rys de Madame D'Allebret."

Imitated from Clément Marot.

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